

CY WHITTAKER'S PLACE

By JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

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"Won't we?" crowed Asaph. "Well, I just guess we will! You ought to hear Angle and the rest of 'em chant hymns of glory about him. A body'd think they always knew he was the salt of the earth. Maybe I don't rub it in a little, hey? Oh, no, maybe not!"

"And Heman!" chimed in Mr. Bangs. "And Heman! Would you ever believe he'd change so all of a sudden? Bully old Whitt! I can mention his name now without Keturah's landin' on to me like a snowflake. Whew! I say whee-ee!"

He continued to say it, and Georgeanna and Asaph said what amounted to the same thing. A change had come over our Bayport social atmosphere, a marvelous change. And at Simmons' and—more wonderful still—at Tad Simpson's barber shop plans were being made and perfected for proceedings in which Cyrus Whittaker was to play the most prominent part.

Meanwhile the convalescence went on at a rapid rate. As soon as he was permitted to talk Captain Cy began to question his lawyer. How about the appeal? Had Atkins done anything further? The answers were satisfactory. The case had been dropped—the Honorable Heman had announced its withdrawal. He had said that he had changed his mind and should not continue to espouse the Thomas cause. In fact, he seemed to have whirled completely about on his pedestal and, like a compass, now pointed only in one direction—toward his "boyhood friend" and present neighbor, Cyrus Whittaker.

"It's perfectly astounding," commented Peabody. "What in the world, captain, did you do to him while you were in Washington?"

"Oh, nothin' much," was the rather disinterested answer. "Him and me had a talk, and he saw the error of his ways, I callate. How's Bos'n today? Did you give her my love when you phoned?"

"So far as the case is concerned," went on the lawyer, "I think we should have won that, anyway. It's a curious thing. Thomas has disappeared. How he got word or who he got it from I don't know, but he must have, and he's gone somewhere, no one knows where. And yet I'm not certain that we were on the right trail. It seemed certain a week ago, but now—"

The captain had not been listening. He was thinking. Thomas had gone, had he? Good! Heman was living up to his promises. And Bos'n, God bless her, was free from that danger.

"Have you heard from Emmie? I asked you," he repeated.

He would not listen to anything further concerning Thomas either then or later. He was sick of the whole business, he declared, and now that everything was all right didn't wish to talk about it again. He asked nothing about the appropriation, and the lawyer, acting under strict orders, did not mention it.

Only once did Captain Cy inquire concerning a person in his home town who was not a member of his household.

"How is—er—how's the teacher?" he inquired one morning.

"How's who?"

"Why, Phoebe Dawes, the school-teacher. Smart, is she?"

"Yes, indeed. Why, she has been the most!"

The doctor came in just then, and the interview terminated. It was not resumed, because that afternoon Mr. Peabody started for Boston on a business trip, to be gone some time.

And at last came the great day, the day when Captain Cy was to be taken home. He was up and about, had been out for several short walks and was very nearly his own self again. He was in good spirits, too, at times, but had fits of seeming depression which under the circumstances were unexplainable. The doctor thought they were due to his recent illness and forbade questioning.

The original plan had been for the captain to go to Bayport in the train, but the morning set for his departure was such a beautiful one that Mr. Peabody, who had the day before returned from the city, suggested driving over. So the open carriage, drawn by the Peabody "spau," was brought around to the front steps, and the captain, bundled up until, as he said, he felt like a wharf rat inside a cotton bale, emerged from the house which had sheltered him for a weary month and climbed to the back seat. The attorney got in beside him.

"All ashore that's goin' ashore," observed Captain Cy. Then to the driver, who stood by the horses' heads, he added: "Stand by to get ship under way, commodore. I'm homeward bound, and there's a little messmate of mine waitin' on the dock already. I wouldn't wonder. So don't hang around these waters no longer 'n you can help."

But Mr. Peabody smiled and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Just a minute, captain," he said. "We've got another passenger. She came to the house last evening, but

Dr. Cole thought this would be an exciting day for you, and you must sleep in preparation for it. So we kept her in the background. It was something of a job, but—Hurrah! Here she is!" Mrs. Peabody, the lawyer's wife, opened the front door. She was laugh-



"UNCLE CYRUS!" SHE SCREAMED JOYFULLY.

ing. The next moment a small figure shot past her down the steps and into the carriage like a red hooded bombshell.

"Uncle Cyrus!" she screamed joyously. "Uncle Cyrus, it's me! Here I am!"

And Captain Cy, springing up and, shedding wraps and robes, received the bombshell with open arms and hugged it tight.

"Bos'n!" he shouted. "By the big dipper, Bos'n! Why, you little—you—"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THAT was a wonderful ride. Emly sat in the captain's lap—he positively refused to let her sit beside him on the seat, although Peabody urged it, fearing the child might tire him—and her tongue rattled like a sewing machine. She had a thousand things to tell—about her school, about Georgianna, about

her dolls, about Lonesome, the cat, and how many mice he had caught, and about the big snowstorm.

"Georgianna wanted me to stay at home and wait for you, Uncle Cy," she said, "but I tensed and teased, and finally they said I could come over. I came yesterday on the train. Mr. Tidditt went with me to the depot. Mrs. Peabody let me peek into your room last night, and I saw you eating supper. You didn't know I was there, did you?"

"You bet I didn't! There'd have been a mutiny right then if I'd caught sight of you. You little sculpin! Playin' it on your Uncle Cy, was you? I didn't know you could keep a secret so well."

"Oh, yes, I can! Why, I know an ever so much bigger secret too. It is— Why, I most forgot! You just wait."

The captain laughingly begged her to divulge the big secret, but she shook her small head and refused. The horses trotted on at a lively pace, and the miles separating Ostabie and Bayport were subtracted one by one. It was magnificent winter weather. The snow had disappeared from the road, except in widely separated spots, but the big drifts still heaped the fields and shone and sparkled in the sunshine. Against their whiteness the pitch pines and cedars stood darkly green and the skeleton scrub oaks and bushes cast delicate blue penciled shadows. The bay, seen over the flooded, frozen salt meadows and distant dunes, was in its winter dress of the deepest sapphire, trimmed with whitecaps and fringed with stranded ice cakes. There were a snap and a tang in the breeze which braced one like a tonic. The party in the carriage was a gay one.

"Getting tired, captain?" asked Peabody.

"Why? Me? Well, I guess not. Most home, Bos'n. There's the salt works ahead there."

They passed the abandoned salt works, the crumbling ruins of a dead industry, and the boundary stone, now half hidden in a drift, marking the beginning of Bayport township. Then, from the pine grove at the curve farther on, appeared two capped and coated figures, performing a crazy fandango.

"Who's them two lunatics?" inquired Captain Cy. "Whoopin' and carryin' on in the middle of the road? Has anybody up this way had a jug come by to express or— Hey! What? Why, you old idiots you! Come here and let me get hold of you!"

The board of strategy swooped down upon the carriage like Trumet mosquitoes on a summer boarder. They swarmed into the vehicle, Bailey on the front seat and Asaph in the rear, where, somehow or other, they made room for him. There were handshakings and thumps on the back.

"What you doin' way up here in the west end of nowhere?" demanded Captain Cy. "By the big dipper, I'm glad to see you! How'd you get here?"

"Walked," chuckled Bailey. "Frogged it all the way. Soon's Mrs. Peabody wired you was goin' to ride, me and Asa started to meet you. Want'n you surprised?"

"We wanted to be the first to say howdy, old man," explained Asaph.

"Wantin' to welcome you back, you know."

The captain was immensely pleased. "Well, I'm glad I've got so much popularity, anyhow," he said. "Guess 'twill be different when I get down street, hey? Don't callate Tad and Angle 'll shed the joyous tear over me. Never mind; long's my friends are glad I don't care about the rest."

The board looked at each other. "Tad?" repeated Bailey. "And Angle? What you talkin' about? Why, they— Ugh!"

The last exclamation was the result of a tremendous dig in the ribs from the Tidditt fist. Asaph, who had leaped forward to administer it, was frowning and shaking his head. Mr. Bangs relapsed into a grinning silence. West Bayport seemed to be deserted. At one or two houses, however, feminine heads appeared at the windows. One old lady shook a calico apron at the carriage. A child beside her cried "Hurrah!"

"Aunt Hepsy 'l'stin' colors by mistake!" laughed the captain. "She ain't got her specs, I guess, and thinks I'm Heman. That comes of ridin' astern of a span, Peabody."

But as they drew near the center flags were flying from front yard poles. Some of the houses were decorated.

"What in the world?" began Captain Cy. "Land sakes! Look at the school-house, and Simmons', and—and Simpson's!"

The schoolhouse flag was flapping in the wind. The scarred wooden pillars of its portico were hidden with bunting. Simmons' front displayed a row of little banners, each bearing a letter. The letters spelled "Welcome Home!" Tad's barber shop was more or less artistically wreathed in colored tissue paper. There, too, a flag was draped over the front door. Yet not a single person was in sight.

"For goodness' sake," cried the bewildered captain, "what's all this men? And where is everybody? Have all hands?"

He stopped in the middle of the sentence. They were at the foot of Whittaker's hill. Its top, between the Atkins' gate and the Whittaker fence, was black with people. Children pranced about the outskirts of the crowd. A shout came down the wind. The horses, not in the least fatigued by their long canter, trotted up the slope. The shouting grew louder. A wave of youngsters came racing to meet the equipage.

"What—what in time?" gasped Captain Cy. "What's up? I—"

And then the town clerk seized him by the arm. Peabody shook his other hand. Bos'n threw her arms about his neck. Bailey stood up and waved his hat.

"It's you, you old critter!" whooped Asaph. "It's you, d'you understand?"

"The appropriation has at last gone through," explained the lawyer, "and this is the celebration in consequence. And you are the star attraction, because, you see, every one knows you are responsible for it."

"That's what!" howled the excited Bangs. "And we're going to show you what we think of you for doin' it. We've been plannin' this for over a fortnit!"

"And I knew it all the time," squealed Bos'n, "and I didn't tell a word, did I?"

"Three cheers for Captain Whittaker!" bellowed a person in the crowd. This person—wonder of wonders!—was Tad Simpson.

The cheering was, considering the size of the crowd, tremendous. Bewildered and amazed, Captain Cy was assisted from the carriage and escorted to his front door. Amid the handkerchief waving, applauding people he saw Keturah Bangs and Alpheus Sualley and Angelina Plimney and Captain Salters—even Alonzo Snow, his recent opponent in town meeting. Josiah Dimick was there, too, apparently having a fit.

On the doorstep stood Georgianna, and—and—yes, it was true—beside her, grandly extending a welcoming hand, the majestic form of the Hon. Heman Atkins. Some one else was there also, some one who hurriedly slipped back into the crowd as the owner of the Cy Whittaker place came up the path between the hedges.

Mr. Atkins shook the captain's hand and then, turning toward the people, held up his own for silence. To all outward appearance he was still the great Heman, our district idol, philanthropist and leader. His silk hat glistened as of old; his chest swelled in the old manner; his whiskers were just as dignified and awe inspiring. For an instant, as he met the captain's eye, his own faltered and fell, and there was a pleading expression in his face, the lines of which had deepened just a little, but only for an instant; then he began to speak.

"Cy, he said, 'it is my pleasant duty, on behalf of your neighbors and friends here assembled, to welcome you to your—our—ancestral home after your trying illness. I do it heartily, sincerely, gladly. And it is the more pleasing to me to perform this duty because, as I have explained publicly to my fellow townspeople, all disagreement between us is ended. I was wrong—again I publicly admit it. A scheming blackleg, posing in the guise of a loving father, imposed upon me. I am sorry for the trouble I have caused you. Of you and of the little girl with you I ask pardon—I entreat forgiveness.'"

He paused. Captain Cy, the shadow of a smile at the corner of his mouth, nodded and said briefly:

"All right, Heman. I forgive you."

Few heard him. The majority were applauding the congressman. Sylvanus Cahoon, whispering in the ear of Uncle Bedny, expressed as his opinion that "that was about as magnanimous a thing as ever I heard said—yes, sir, mag-na-mi-nous—that's what I call it."

"But," continued the great Atkins, "I have said all this to you before. What I have to say now—what I left my duties in Washington expressly to come here and say—is that Bayport thanks you, I thank you, for your tremendous assistance in obtaining the appropriation which is to make our harbor a busy port, where our gallant fishing fleet may ride at anchor and

unload its catch. Instead of transferring it in dories, as heretofore. Friends, I have already told you how this man, laying a hand on the captain's shoulder, 'came to the capital and used his influence among his acquaintances in high places, with the result that the \$30,000 which I had despaired of getting was added to the bill. I had the pleasure of voting for that bill. It passed. I am proud of that vote.'"

Tremendous applause. Then some one called for three cheers for Mr. Atkins. They were given. But the recipient merely bowed.

"No, no," he said deprecatingly—"no, no, not for me, my friends, much as I appreciate your gratitude. My days of public service are nearly at an end. As I have intimated to some of you already, I am seriously considering retiring from political life in the near future. But that is irrelevant; it is not material at present. Today we meet not to say farewell to the setting but to greet the rising sun. I call for three cheers for our committee of one—Captain Cyrus Whittaker."

When the uproar had at last subsided there were demands for a speech from Captain Cy. But the captain, facing them, his arms about the delighted Bos'n, positively declined to orate.

"I—I'm ever so much obliged to you, folks," he stammered. "I am so. But you'll have to excuse me from speech-makin'." They didn't teach it afore the mast, where I went to college. Thank you just the same. And do come and see me, everybody. Me and this little girl," drawing Emly nearer to him, "will be real glad to have you."

After the handshaking and congratulating were over the crowd dispersed. It was a great occasion; all agreed to that. But the majority considered it a divided triumph. The captain had done a lot for the town, of course, but the Honorable Atkins had made another splendid impression 'y his address of welcome. Most people thought it as fine as his memorable effort at town meeting. Unlike that one, however, in this instance it is safe to say

that none, not even the adoring and praise chanting Miss Plimney, derived quite the enjoyment from the congressman's speech that Captain Cy did. It tickled his sense of humor.

"Ase," he observed irreverently when the five—Tidditt, Georgianna, Bailey, Bos'n and himself—were at last alone again in the sitting room, "it don't pay to tip over a monument, does it—not out in public, I mean? You wouldn't want to see me blow up Bunker Hill, would you?"

"Blow up Bunker Hill!" repeated Asaph in alarmed amazement. "God-frey scissors, I believe you're goin' loony! This day's been too much for you. What are you talkin' about?"

"Oh, nothin'," with a quiet chuckle. "I was thinkin' out loud, that's all. Did you ever notice them imitation stone pillars on Heman's house? They're hollow inside, but you'd never guess it. And long as you do know they're hollow you can keep a watch on 'em. And there's one thing sure," he added, "they are ornamental."

To Be Continued.

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FAITH IN PINS



Mrs. Youngwed (three a. m.)—And to think I pinned my faith to your high sense of honor!

Mr. Youngwed (loaded)—Justah like—hie—a woman; thingish that pins—hie—will holdah anything—hie—and always.

NOT ENCOURAGING



"What's the matter, senator? You look as if you had heard bad news!" "Well, it isn't exactly what I would call cheerful news. I gave out an interview yesterday in which I said that I had decided to retire at the end of my present term."

"Yes?" "I've just got a telegram from home saying my constituents held a grand ratification meeting last night."

WHICH ONE?



He—Why won't you marry me? Enough for one is always enough for two, you know.

She—Have you enough for one? He—Yes.

She—Which one?

QUITE DIFFERENT



Constance—Did he tell you th t? Why, Clara, I don't see how you could have listened to him.

Clara—Well, you know, dear, he said it in French.

Constance—Oh, that's different.

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